

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SCCT-01 SAB-01 PM-03

H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 /077 W

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O R 200955Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4652

INFO AMEMASSY AMMAN

:AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 5982

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6705

BEIRUT POUCH BAGHDAD

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, IS, XF

SUBJ: ARAB TERRORIST ATTACK ON BET SHEAN

REF: TEL AVIV 6677

1. SUMMARY. GOI HAS RESPONDED TO BET SEHAN TERRORIST INCIDENT BY (A) STRESSING THAT IT DEMONSTRATES TRUE CHARACTER OF PLO; (B) WARNING JORDAN THAT BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY IS ON GOJ TO DEMONSTRATE NON-COOPERATION WITH TERRORISTS; (C) PLEDGING RETRIBUTION WITHIN AND BEYOND ISRAELI BORDERS; (D) CONDEMNING REACTION OF BET SHEAN MOB IN BURNING BODIES; AND (E) ADMONISHING PUBLIC TO REFRAIN FROM RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST ISRAELI ARABS OR WEST

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BANKERS. AS TO IDF HANDLING OF ATTACK ITSELF, INFO MIN YARIV

SAID THAT DECISION TAKEN AT HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL BUT REFUSED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER GOI MIGHT NEGOTIATE WITH TERROSITS IN FUTURE INCIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL MEDIA HAVE REPORTED FACT THAT TERRORISTS WHO CARRIED OUT ATTACK IN BET SHEAN NOV 19 CARRIED LEAFLETS LINKING THEM WITH HAWATMEH'S PFLP, SAME GROUP WHICH CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAALOT MASSACRE IN SPRING. DESCRIBING PFLP AS INTEGRAL PART OF PLO, INFOMIN YARIV SAID AT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT ARAFAT'S OLIVE BRANCH HAD PROVED TO BE DAGGER. YARIV ADDED THAT BET SHEAN ATTACK HAD PROVED ISRAELI POINT THAT INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION WOULD NOT LEAD PLO TOWARD MODERATION BUT, ON CONTRARY, WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE IT TO ENGAGE IN TERRORISM.

3. IDF SPOKESMAN EVENING NOV 19 SAID PRESUMPTION WAS THAT TERRORISTS HAD INFILTRATED FROM JORDAN, THOUGH THEIR ORIGIN WAS PROBABLY SYRIA. HE POINTED TO FORGED JORDANIAN IDENTITY CARDS CARRIED BY TERRORISTS AND TRACKS FOUND LEADING FROM JORDANIAN BORDER. SPOKESMAN MADE CLEAR EVIDENCE DID NOT RPT NOT INDICATE INFILTRATORS WERE CITIZENS OF JORDAN. INFO MINISTER YARIV ADDED THAT, WHILE ISRAEL WOULD NOT RPT NOT CONCLUDE THAT JORDAN HAD BEGUN ASSISTING TERRORIST GROUPS, ONUS WAS ON JORDAN TO PROVE IT HAD NOT RPT NOT COOPERATED WITH MEN WHO ATTACKED BET SHEAN.

4. IN STATEMENT TO KNESSET NOV 19, DEFMIN PERES SAID, "THE SECURITY FORCES OF ISRAEL, WITH THE IDF IN THE CENTER, WILL DEAL UNCEASING BLOWS AT THE TERRORIST BASES, THEIR CAMPS IN LEBANON, THE TERRORIST ROUTES ACROSS ALL BORDERS, AND THE TERRORISTS IN EVERY CORNER IN THE COUNTRY UNTIL THE LAST ONE IS LIQUIDATED." INFOMIN YARIV AND POLICE MINISTER HILLEL, IN SPEAKING TO PRESS, ALSO GAVE STRONG EMPHASIS TO ISRAELI DETERMINATION TO DEFEAT TERRORISTS.

5. OFFICIAL ACCOUNTING OF VICTIMS HAS BEEN ADJUSTED TO THREE TERRORISTS AND FOUR ISRAELI CIVILIANS. ORIGINAL MISCOUNT IS ATTRIBUTED BY PRESS TO GRISLY FACT THAT, BEFORE POLICE COULD INTERVENE, MOB OF BET SHEAN RESIDENTS BURNED FOUR BODIES IN BELIEF THAT ALL FOUR WERE TERRORISTS. IT WAS LATER DETERMINED THAT ONE OF FOUR WAS ISRAELI VICTIM, FACT DISCOVERED ONLY WHEN CHILDREN REPORTED THEIR FATHER MISSING. YARIV "IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNMENT," PUBLICLY CONDEMNED BURNING OF BODIES, AS HAS ALL ISRAELI PRESS.

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MAARIV CALLED IT "A WOUND TO OUR SOULS".

6. IN VIEW UGLY REACTION OF BET SHEAN RESIDENTS, YARIV SAW FIT AT PRESS CONFERENCE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT GOI STRONGLY CONDEMNED ANY ACTION OR CONTEMPLATED ACTION AGAINST ISRAELI ARABS OR THE WEST BANK POPULATION. HILLEL ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST ANY MOVE TO PREVENT WEST BANK ARABS FROM WORKING IN ISRAEL AS MEANS TO STEM TERRORISM, COURSE OF ACTION REPORTEDLY MENTIONED AS POSSIBILITY BY

MAYOR OF BET SHEAN. HILLEL SAID SUCH REACTION WOULD ONLY PROVIDE SUCCESS TO THE TERRORIST GOAL OF UNDERMINING EXISTING COEXISTENCE BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND RESIDENTS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BY DISRUPTING THEIR DAILY LIVES.

7. YARIV TERMED IDF REACTION AT BET SHEAN "RAPID AND RESOLUTE", BUT REFUSED TO DECLARE THAT ISRAEL WOULD NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS. HE SAID ORDER TO STORM APARTMENT LESS THAN TWO HOURS AFTER DETECTION OF TERRORISTS WAS TAKEN BY PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER. COMMANDING GENERAL OF NORTHERN COMMAND, RAFAEL EYTAN, MEETING WITH NEWSMEN AT BET SHEAN, SAID HOWEVER THAT IDF ACTION WAS CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ISRAELI POLICY AGAINST NEGOTIATING WITH TERRORISTS.

8. COMMENT: AFTER EVENTS OF PAST FEW WEEKS, CULMINATING IN UN ACCLAIM FOR ARAFAT, ATTACK ON BET SHEAN HAS ONLY REINFORCED CONVICTION THAT ISRAEL HAS BEEN RIGHT AND VIRTUALLY REST OF WORLD WRONG REGARDING TRUE NATURE OF PLO. STATEMENTS OF SENIOR GOI LEADERS WOULD APPEAR TO PRESAGE STEPPED-UP ACTIVITIES AGAINST TERRORISTS IN DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD. WE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, DRAW ANY FIRM CONCLUSION FROM IDF ACTION AT BET SHEAN RE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE OF WHETHER TO NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS HOLDING ISRAELI HOSTAGES. WE BELIEVE GOI PREFERS TO KEEP ITS OPTIONS OPEN, AND HANDLE FUTURE INCIDENTS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.
KEATING

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